all the concerned agencies in the detection and prevention of smuggling. Close co-ordination is also being maintained with the Customs authorities of His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

(b) There are 22 Land Customs Stations on the Indo-Nepal border and 55 Preventive Units in the Indo-Nepal border Customs Collectorate with Headquarters at Patna which are charged with the responsibility of combating smuggling along the Indo-Nepal border. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence which is the apex body for the collection, collation and dissemination of intelligence on smuggling actively assists the Indo-Nepal border Collectorate of Customs through two Regional Units at Lucknow and Patna, two sub-units at Varanasi and Siliguri and two Intelligence Cells at Gorakhpur and Muzafarpur.

(c) Smuggling being a clandestine activity, it is not feasible to make any precise estimate of the quantum of goods being smuggled into the country from Nepal. However, the number of cases booked and the value of seizures effected by the Customs authorities on the Indo-Nepal border and the adjoining areas during the last four years is given below:—

Year	Number of cases	Vale of goods seized (Rs. in lakhs)
1985	4743	607.61
1986	5926	895.11
1987	6468	1287.82
1988 (u to June)	3482*	918.28£

*Figures are provisional.

The increase in the value of seizures need not necessarily indicate an increaese in the smuggling activities and could be due to the intensification of the drive against smuggling.

(d) Available Intelligence reports indicate that Krishnanagar (Nepal)-Barhni (U.P.) sector of India-Nepal border is sensitive to smuggling. However, there is no intelligence to suggest that 5 or 6 truckloads with foreign goods leave Krishnagar (Nepal) every day for India.

(e) Available intelligence reports do not indicate that AK-47 assault rifles are being smuggled from Nepal into India. No seizure of these rifles has been reported so far.

Three cases of encounters with smugglers on this border during January, February, 1988 have been reported. In these encounters, 31 rounds were fired from the departmental weapons. However, no injury has been reported.

Evasion of Excise Duty by M/s. ITO Limited

876. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Directorate of Anti-Evasion carried out search and seizure operations in February, 1987 against M/s. ITC Limited, a cigarette manufacturing company and that a notice was issued regarding evasion of tax worth Rs. 1400 crores by the Company;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ITC is indulging in litigation; if so, what are the details of the litigation cases pending finalisation; and

(c) by when the amount due against the Company is likely to be recovered,

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) Searches were carried out by the Directorate of Anti-evasion with the assistance of local Central Excise officers against

M/s. ITC Ltd., their job workers and dealers on 17-2-87. After investigations a show cause notice for Rs. 803.77 crores was issued on 27-3-87 by the Directorate of Anti-Evasion for the period 1-3-83 to 28-2-87 against M/s. ITC and its 7 outside contract manufacturers. For the period prior to 1-3-83, ten show cause notices demanding duty of Rs. 300.65 crores have been issued against M/s. ITC and their outside contract manufacturers.

(b) M/s. ITC Ltd. filed a writ petition in Calcutta High Court challenging the Show Cause Notice demanding duty of Rs. 803.77 crores and for grant of injunction against the adjudication proceedings. Writ petition was dismissed by the single Judge Bench of Calcutta High Court on 24-12-87 after hearing the matter.

The party filed an appeal before the Division Bench of Calcutta High Court. The hearing in the appeal is still continuing.

(c) All the cases referred to in reply to Part (a) above are presently under adjudication by various adjudicating authorities. The question of recovery of any amounts will arise only after the cases have been adjudicated.

Holding of Loan Melas

877. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA:

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV:

SHRI HARI SINGH:

SHRI SOHAN LAL DHUSIYA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided not to hold loan meals henceforth;

(b) what is the number of loan melas held during the last three years; and

(c) what is the number of loan melas held so far during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (c) Depending on local responsiveness—the public sector banks have been organising credit camps as a part of the overall measures taken by them to improve flow of credit to weaker sections. The present data reporting system does not yield information in respect of number of credit camps organised by the banks. The banks follow the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India for lending to priority sector for all loans whether they are given at bank branches or at credit camps.

Gramin Banks

878. SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA:

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV:

SHRI SOHAN LAL DHUSIYA:

SHRI HARI SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Gramin Banks functioning at present in the country;

(b) what is the total coverage of villages and population;

(c) how many of them are working on profit; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to make these banks viable?